

Good Neighbor Environmental Board **ROUND-UP**

Board and environmental news along the U.S.-Mexico border

Volume 3, Number 1
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Good Neighbor Board News

*from the Good Neighbor Environmental Board
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Upcoming Good Neighbor Environmental Board Meetings

- June 5-6, 2002 El Paso, TX
- October 9-10, 2002 Nogales, AZ

El Paso Meeting on June 5-6 to Focus on Innovative Partnerships

The theme for the Board's next meeting, which will take place in El Paso, TX on June 5-6, will be "innovative partnerships." Contrary to former expectations, a formal Joint Session with the Board's Mexican counterpart advisory group focused on the northern border will not take place during this session, although informal dialogue on this topic continues.

Final Board Meeting of 2002 to Take Place in Nogales, Arizona

The last meeting of the Board during 2002 will take place in Nogales, Arizona on October 9-10. Its dual theme: "conservation" and "health." In addition, the meeting will include a special two-hour session on the relationship between Homeland Security and border-region environmental infrastructure.

EPA Representation on Board Shifts from Region 6 to 9

Laura Yoshii, Deputy Regional Administrator of the EPA Region 9 office in San Francisco, has become the new EPA representative to the Board. She replaces Gregg Cooke, Regional Administrator for EPA Region 6 in Dallas. The two offices historically have rotated this responsibility. EPA is one of eight federal agencies with representation on the Board; currently, there are vacancies for the HUD and Commerce slots.

Border Region and National News

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Note: The items in the section below have been cut-and-pasted and compiled from other documents. Please check a primary source to ensure complete accuracy. Web sites may have to be re-entered.

BECC - Two environmental infrastructure projects were approved at the last public meeting of the BECC Board on March 20 in Austin, TX: Improvements to the Regional System of Water, Sewage and Waste Water Treatment of Eagle Pass, Texas; and Improvements of the Water and Sewage Systems of El Paso Water Control and Improvement District #4 of Febens, TX. The Board also approved technical assistance grants for the following communities: La Joya, TX; Matamoros, Tamaulipas; Tornillo, TX; El Paso County, TX; and Somerton, AZ.

Bilateral Cooperation - Monterrey Talks Presidents Bush and Fox met for bilateral discussions in Monterrey, Mexico on March 22 following the U.N. Conference on Financing for Development. They discussed: 1) "Partnership for Prosperity," including Millenium Challenge Grants, which promotes development in less-developed regions of Mexico; 2) "Smart Border," which facilitates legal trade and human transit across the border; and 3) next steps for reforming BECC and NADBank.

According to the agreement, NADBank and BECC will remain focused on environmental infrastructure priorities and will continue their work as reforms are implemented. Key recommendations: a) Geographic scope for projects in the United States should stay at 100km but expand in Mexico to 300km from the border; grants and low interest rate loans should be concentrated on projects in the poorest communities located within the current border region of 100km for both countries; b) NADBank should double its Low Interest Rate Lending Facility and increase grants out of its own resources; c) the two boards of directors should be replaced by a single board to oversee both institutions; a comprehensive business process review should be initiated; and d) a more concerted effort should be made to certify and finance private sector environmental projects. See <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ar>

CEC - JPAC - The Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation held its first regular session on March 8. It adopted Advice 02-01 to Council, which recommends approaches for more fully integrating children's health into the work of the CEC. In addition, Victor Lichtinger has nominated three new members to the JPAC: Adriana Nelly Correa, Mindahi Crescencio Bastida-Munoz, and Carlos Sandoval. Contact: mpepin@ccemtl.org

Draft Plan - CEC has released its draft North American Regional Action Plan on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. Public comment period ends May 8, 2002. See www.cec.org/programs_projects/pollutants_health/321/

Colonias - According to a recent posting in BasinNet, a colonia near Laredo is having a \$100,000 solar-powered purification system installed to provide clean drinking water; the grant is from the State Energy Conservation Office. See www.rioweb.org/Archive/year2002/March02

Conservation - Habitat - Pronatura has received funds from the World Bank for preservation of land that functions as biological corridors or provides habitat for endangered species. El Valle de Cuatrociénegas, in Coahuila, is one of the areas that will benefit. See www.rioweb.org/Archive/year2002/March02

National Parks - Big Bend National Park in TX is among "America's 10 Most Endangered Parks," according to the National Parks and Conservation Association. See www.npca.org

Emergency Response - Funds - The Bush administration has asked Congress for an additional \$27.1 billion, \$327 million of which is for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help states and localities

respond to chemical, biological and other terrorism, according to a March 22 article in the Washington Post.

Sister Cities - Authorities in Ciudad Acuna, Coahuila and Del Rio, TX, are preparing for their first binational emergency response simulation exercise, which is scheduled to take place on April 5th. See www.rioweb.org/AArchive

Energy - EPA has proposed allowing certain hazardous byproduct materials to be processed with gasification technology in order to increase energy efficiency and reduce the volume of hazardous waste to be treated and disposed of on land. Other related activities to be announced include waste minimization strategies, additional energy recovery projects, and a retail initiative. See www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/index.htm

Health - **Children's** - Effects of toxic chemical exposures on the health of U.S. children is one focus of a new federal study to be directed by EPA and DHHS called "The National Children's Study of Environmental Effects on Child Health and Development." The full study is to begin in 2004 and end about 2030. See <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/cespr/cohort/>

Globally speaking, at the recent International Conference on Environmental Threats to the Health of Children, the World Health Organization said that 3 million children under the age of 5 die each year due to environmental health hazards and accidents. See www.who.int/peh/ceh/

Tracking - CDC working groups have been meeting to develop recommendations on setting up a new system called the Nationwide Health Tracking Network, which is aimed at enhancing federal and state tracking of chronic diseases and related environmental factors. See www.envirohealthaction.org

Legislation - Congressman Silvestre Reyes (TX) has introduced the Border Economic Recovery Act, H.R. 4063. The bill is co-sponsored by Richard Gephardt (MO), Charles Gonzales (TX), and border members Bob Filner (CA), Ruben Hinojosa (TX), Ciro Rodriguez (TX), and Solomon Ortiz (TX). Contact: Corine Walworth, (202) 226-8336.

Report - **Effects of September 11** - The U.S.-Mexico Border Governors Conference published a report in February 2002 that describes the effects of September 11 on conditions in the border region, including environmental conditions. Among recommendations are improving the transboundary tracking of hazardous waste. Contact: Ruben Alvarez, (602) 542-1288.

Sustainable Development - A call to harmonize binational institutions is among the policy recommendations that emanated from a May 2001 workshop sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The summary document recently was posted: <http://ecsp.si.edu>

Tribes - Udall Center's Native Nations Institute is co-sponsoring a series of Executive Education sessions in May at the University of Arizona, Tucson, for Tribal Council Members and Tribal Chief Executives. Contact: nni@email.arizona.edu

Water - **Allocation** - State and federal agencies have released a plan to distribute water from the Colorado River among water users in Arizona, California, and Nevada. See www.lc.usbr.gov

Management - According to a recent article in the Albuquerque Journal, the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly and the Council of Governments seek public input on a regional water-management plan that will be submitted to the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission next year. See www.abqjournal.com

Supply Security - EPA has announced details on a \$90 million national effort to make drinking water and wastewater utilities as safe as possible. Large drinking water system authorities will be eligible to apply for grants. EPA will work cooperatively with states, tribes, and other organizations to enhance security at smaller systems. See www.epa.gov/ow

Wastewater treatment - The city of Imperial Beach, CA, has adopted a policy on cross-border sewage and water-quality issues that calls for actions including enhanced notification between the U.S. and Mexico during system failures, maintenance shut-downs, and spills.

Website - Best practices - USDA and the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils have launched a website of success stories on sustainable agriculture, sustainable community development, and sustainable forest management. See www.rcdsuccess.com or contact jeri.berc@usda.gov.

Events Calendar

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*Notes: Event listings below have been drawn from other lists. Please check a primary source for accuracy. **Events specific to border region are in bold**. Web sites may have to be re-entered. Please notify Editor of changes.*

- April 9-10** Forum on Environmental Health at the CA-Baja CA border, Mexicali, BC. See: www.ccbres.sdsu.edu
- April 10** EPA El Paso Border Office Monthly Border Forum, Evelyn Daniels, EPA R6, Children's Environmental Health, El Paso, TX.
- April 10** Forum on Environmental Health at the CA-Baja CA Border, Mexicali, BC.
- April 11** EPA San Diego Border Office Open House, National City, CA.
- April 20-23** NHEC's 7th Annual National Hispanic Sustainable Energy & Environmental Conference, Tucson, AZ.
- April 24-25** H2O Americas Private Sector Opportunities in Latin American Water conference, Institute of the Americas, San Diego, CA. Contact: hernan@iamericas.org
- May 6-8** Border Institute IV, Rio Rico, AZ. See www.scerp.org
- May 6-8** X International Meeting Expo Agua 2002, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon. See www.smaac.org.mx/expoagua
- May 8** EPA El Paso Border Office Monthly Border Forum, El Paso, TX.
- May 9** EPA San Diego Border Office Open House
- May 14-16** Udall Center Environmental Conflict Resolution conference, Tucson, AZ. Contact: ecr@bscmanage.com
- May 15-17** 4th Conference on Research and Resource Management in the Southwestern Deserts, Tucson, AZ. See www.werc.usgs.gov/sdfs/meetings.html
- May 17-21** River Network's 3rd Annual River Rally, Asheville, NC. See www.rivernetwork.org
- May 20-24** Third National Water Quality Monitoring Conference; includes workshop on data comparability across international boundaries, Madison, WI. Contact: John Klein, USGS, (650)329-5264.
- May 22-24** Arizona-Mexico Commission Plenary Conference, Phoenix, AZ. See www.azmc.org
- May 31-June 1** U.S.-Mexico Border Counties Coalition Legislative Conference, El Paso, TX. Contact: dian@austin-copelin.com

June 3-4 National Symposium: Designating Attainable Uses for the Nation's Waters, Washington, D.C. See www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/symposium

June 4-7 U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association Annual Meeting, Chihuahua, Chihuahua

June 5-6 Good Neighbor Environmental Board Meeting, El Paso, TX.

June 12 EPA El Paso Border Office Monthly Border Forum, El Paso, TX.

June 18-19 CEC Annual Council Session, Ottawa, Ontario

June 21-22 U.S.-Mexico Border Governors' Conference, Phoenix, AZ.

July 23-26 Universities Council on Water Resources Annual Conference, "Integrated Transboundary Water Management," Traverse City, Michigan. See www.uwin.siu.edu/ucowr/

Sept 12 EPA San Diego Border Office Open House

Oct 9-10 Good Neighbor Environmental Board Meeting, Nogales, AZ

Oct 10 EPA San Diego Border Office Open House

Oct 21-23 Race for Clean Water Conference 2002, Dover, DE. See www.dnrec.state.de

Oct. 24-25 Border Energy Forum IX, Saltillo, Coahuila. See www.glo.state.tx.us/energy/border/forum/9/

Nov 7-9 IV Meeting on the Border Environment, Tucson, AZ. See www.encuentrofronterizo.org

Nov 18-22 First International Symposium on Transboundary Waters Management, Monterrey, MX. See www.TransboundaryWatersMexico.org

Dec EPA National Compliance Assistance Providers Forum, San Antonio, TX.

2003

Mar 16-23 The 3rd World Water Forum, Kyoto, Shiga, and Osaka, Japan. See www.worldwaterforum.org

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